

The deputy director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture will succeed Director John Etchepare, who retires this month, Gov. Dave Freudenthal announced today.

Jason Fearneyhough, a Cheyenne native, has served as the department's deputy director since 2006. In that role, Fearneyhough has demonstrated that he has the skill set needed to manage the large, complex agency, the Governor said.

"Jason has some big shoes to fill," the Governor said. "But one of the great things about John Etchepare is his understanding of the need to foster the next generation of leaders in the state, and Jason has learned from one of the best. During his tenure, John has worked hard to foster relationships with the Game and Fish Department, and to work closely with the BLM and other federal land management agencies. Jason has shown the willingness and ability to continue this work and I look forward to seeing him grow in the job."

Fearneyhough said, "I'm incredibly honored to serve in this position both for the state of Wyoming and for an industry that I love. I think the department is going in a very good direction and I think the leadership of John Etchepare is the reason for that."

The Wyoming Department of Agriculture oversees the state veterinary services lab, consumer health services, commodity production oversight, state Weed and Pest districts, the Wyoming State Fair and other programs.

Fearneyhough earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural communications from the University of Wyoming and is currently working on his master's of business.